



Department of Justice

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Southern District of Mississippi**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, JULY 16, 2007
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MINNESOTA WOMAN SENTENCED FOR KATRINA FRAUD

HATTIESBURG, Miss. – Serena Mackey, of Minneapolis, Minnesota was sentenced in federal court today for submitting false claims to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, U.S. Attorney Dunn Lampton announced.

Mackey pled guilty in July to filing false and fraudulent claims for disaster assistance. In those claims, she falsely stated that she was a resident of Petal, MS during Hurricane Katrina, when in fact she was living in Minneapolis at the time. Based on those fraudulent claims, she was awarded FEMA rental assistance to a Minneapolis address and awarded FEMA disaster assistance. Mackey was sentenced to 3 years supervised probation. She was also ordered to pay restitution to FEMA in the amount of \$5,510.00.

In September, 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the national Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, designed to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft, procurement fraud and insurance fraud. The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force - chaired by Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division, Alice S. Fisher, includes members from the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, the Postal Inspector's Office and the Executive Office of United States Attorneys, among others.

Pursuant to the Justice Department initiative, a local Katrina Fraud Task Force, consisting of over 20 Federal and State law enforcement agencies, was formed in the Southern District of Mississippi to pursue and prosecute individuals who engage in fraud associated with the hurricanes.

If anyone has information concerning possible fraud being committed during the post-Katrina recovery effort, please call either the DHS-OIG Fraud Hotline at 1-866-720-5721 or the FBI Fraud Hotline at 1-800-225-5324.

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